

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-11
OIC-02 OES-07 NSF-02 EB-08 SOE-02 DOE-15 COM-04
OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
AGRE-00 AID-05 HEW-06 LAB-04 /194 W
-----068628 111036Z /10

R 110752Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1525

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 7419

DEPT REPEAT AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY TBIO IN UN

SUBJECT: INDIAN PREPARATIONS FOR UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (UNCSTD)

SUMMARY: THE GOI HAS NOT YET COMPLETED ITS COUNTRY PAPER FOR
UNCSTD BUT A PRELIMINARY DOCUMENT PREPARED FOR INTERNAL GOI
DELIBERATIONS HAS IDENTIFIED THE FIVE KEY AREAS ON WHICH THE GOI
WOULD LIKE TO CONCENTRATE: INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT, ENERGY,
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES; BASIC HUMAN NEEDS; AND MANAGEMENT OF
S AND T FOR DEVELOPMENT. THE THEMES OF "TECHNOLOGICAL INDEPENDENCE"
AND OF THE NEED FOR BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND
USERS OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH RUN THROUGH THE DISCUSSIONS OF ALL FIVE
AREAS. THERE IS RELATIVELY LITTLE ATTENTION TO POSSIBLE UN ACTIONS,
AND SURPRISINGLY LITTLE SCOPE FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IS
IDENTIFIED, BUT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THIS ASPECT WILL BE
ADDRESSED MORE FULLY IN THE FINAL COUNTRY PAPER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SPONSORING AN ELABORATE
PREPARATORY PROCESS IN CONNECTION WITH THE UN CONFERENCE ON
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT. THE NATIONAL PAPER HAS NOT
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YET BEEN COMPLETED, BUT GOI SCIENCE OFFICIALS WHO ARE DRAFTING IT
HAVE SAID THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO COLLABORATE WITH US IN
PROMOTING ITEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST ONCE THEY HAVE THE PAPER DONE.

2. AS PART OF THE DRAFTING PROCESS, THE GOI RECENTLY HELD A MAMMOTH
WORKSHOP FOR SOME 300 PEOPLE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT
WITH AN INTEREST IN THE NATIONAL PAPER. THE WORKSHOP INCLUDED

FIFTEEN PARTICIPANTS FROM REGIONAL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH, BURMA, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND SRI LANKA. THE PAPERS PREPARED FOR THE WORKSHOP AND THE DISCUSSION AT THE WORKSHOP ITSELF, CONCENTRATED ON THE SUBJECT AREAS INDIA HAS ELECTED TO CONCENTRATE ON, IDENTIFYING WHAT IS REQUIRED IN EACH SUBJECT AREA TO APPLY THE FRUITS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOPMENT. DR. R.D. DESHPANDE OF THE GOI DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, WHO IS DRAFTING THE NATIONAL PAPER, HAS TOLD US, HOWEVER, THAT HE INTENDS TO DEVOTE MUCH OF THAT DOCUMENT TO CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL AND UN ACTION.

3. THE BASIC PREPARATORY DOCUMENT FOR THIS WORKSHOP PROVIDES SOME INSIGHTS INTO THE INDIAN APPROACH TO THE UN CONFERENCE. THE FIVE KEY SUBJECT AREAS SELECTED BY THE INDIANS ARE:

- (A) S AND T FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT
- (B) S AND T FOR ENERGY
- (C) S AND T FOR NON-RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES
- (D) S AND T FOR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS
- (E) MANAGEMENT FOR THE APPLICATION OF S AND T FOR DEVELOPMENT.

4. UNDER EACH HEADING, THE DISCUSSION FOLLOWS A SIMILAR OUTLINE WHICH FEATURES PROMINENTLY PARAGRAPHS ON THE REASONS FOR "TECHNOLOGICAL DEPENDENCY" AND THE MEANS OF OVERCOMING IT. AS A RESULT, THE OVERALL THRUST OF THE PAPER SEEMS TO BE THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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INDIA SHOULD TRY TO AVOID IMPORT OF FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. WE EXPECT THAT THIS OUTLOOK WILL BE SOMEWHAT MODIFIED IN THE FINAL PAPERS, THOUGH THE FINAL PAPER WILL PROBABLY BE CRITICAL OF CURRENT MEANS OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER.

5. ONE OTHER THEME WHICH RUNS THROUGH ALL THE SUBJECT AREAS IS THE NEED FOR IMPROVED COORDINATION BETWEEN PRODUCERS AND END-USERS OF R AND D. THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE FACT THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN EACH SUBJECT AREAS FOCUS HEAVILY ON IMPROVING THE GOVERNMENT'S BUREAUCRATIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR DEALING WITH IT.

6. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DISCUSSION ON EACH SUBJECT AREA FOLLOW.

7. INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT: THIS PAPER FOCUSES CHIEFLY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-INDUSTRIES AND ON ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE. TO ENCOURAGE AGRO-INDUSTRIES, IT ARGUES THAT SCIENTIFIC EFFORTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS DEVELOPING PRODUCTION PROCESSES WHICH MAXIMIZE EMPLOYMENT, AND SELECTING PRODUCTS WITH A MARKET IN RURAL AREAS. THIS LATTER CRITERION WOULD TEND TO DISCOURAGE THOSE TYPES OF FOOD PROCESSING

WHICH RESULT IN AN EXPENSIVE PRODUCT (E.G. CANNED GOODS).

8. UNDER ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE, THE PAPER DESCRIBES THE NEED FOR IMPROVED WATER RESOURCES DETECTION, LOW COST RELIABLE PUMPS, AND SIMPLE WATER PURIFICATION TECHNIQUES. IN EACH CASE, HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM CITED IS NOT THE STATE OF THE ART BUT RATHER THE INSUFFICIENCY OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO APPLY KNOWN TECHNOLOGY. THERE IS A BRIEF REFERENCE TO THE NEED FOR DRAINAGE. NO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ARE MADE FOR EITHER SUB-CATEGORY UNDER INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

9. ENERGY: THE DISCUSSION OF USING S AND T FOR ENERGY EMPHASIZES CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES, WHICH IT REGARDS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES FOR THE SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM. THE PAPER CITES UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH SATISFACTION THE FACT THAT INDIA NOW PRODUCES OVER 80 PERCENT OF THE MACHINERY NEEDED FOR POWER PLANT CONSTRUCTION, THEREBY REDUCING ITS "TECHNOLOGICAL DEPENDENCY". IT FAVORS DEVELOPING JOINT VENTURES IN COAL GASIFICATION AND LIQUEFACTION, DESPITE THE PARTIAL TECHNOLOGICAL "DEPENDENCY" THIS IMPLIES. (WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE RESERVATIONS WITHIN THE GOI ABOUT THE WISDOM OF UNDERTAKING THESE MASSIVE INVESTMENTS AND ABOUT INDIA'S ABILITY TO UNDERTAKE THESE PROCESSES INDEPENDENTLY.) IT ARGUES FOR RESEARCH ON TECHNOLOGIES WHICH ENCOURAGE "DECENTRALIZED ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION", WITH SPECIAL EFFORTS DIRECTED TOWARD FINDING LESS CAPITAL-INTENSIVE TECHNIQUES.

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00
OIC-02 OES-07 NSF-02 EB-08 SOE-02 DOE-15 COME-00
OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20
AID-05 AGRE-00 HEW-06 LAB-04 /190 W

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R 110752Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1526

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DEPT REPEAT AS DESIRED

10. THE DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR POWER STRONGLY EMPHASIZES INDIA'S NEED TO BECOME AS INDEPENDENT AS POSSIBLE OF FOREIGN SOURCES OF KNOWHOW AND FUEL. IT CITES "GRAVEL PROBLEMS" WITH THE SUPPLY OF ENRICHED URANIUM TO TARAPUR. TO PREVENT FUTURE FUEL SUPPLY PROBLEMS, THE PAPER PRESENTS THE FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS FOR BREEDER REACTORS, WHICH WOULD PERMIT INDIA TO USE ITS ABUNDANT THORIUM RESOURCES BY USING PLUTONIUM DERIVED FROM POWER STATIONS WORKING ON NATURAL URANIUM.

11. THE PAPER DOES DISCUSS BRIEFLY THE NEED TO EXPLOIT NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES, ESPECIALLY RENEWABLE ONES, BUT REGARDS THEIR EXPLOITATION ON ANY KIND OF SCALE IN INDIA AS SOME TIME AWAY. IT ARGUES FOR "GREATER INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION" ON ENERGY GENERALLY, WITHOUT DEFINING WHAT THIS MEANS.

12. NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES: THE PAPER DISCUSSES ONLY TWO RESOURCES UNDER THIS RUBRIC: BAUXITE, WHICH IS FOUND IN ABUNDANCE IN INDIA BUT FOR WHICH INDIA WOULD LIKE TO FIND LESS EXPENSIVE AND LESS ENERGY-INTENSIVE PROCESSING TECHNIQUES, AND PHOSPHATE, NEEDED FOR INDIA'S AGRICULTURAL UNCLASSIFIED

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DEVELOPMENT BUT IN RELATIVELY SHORT SUPPLY. THE PRINCIPAL GAPS TO WHICH THE PAPER ARGUES THAT S AND T SHOULD BE APPLIED ARE DEVELOPING BETTER INFORMATION ON THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES, AND THE ADAPTATION OF TECHNIQUES OF EXPLOITATION TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LOCALLY AVAILABLE MINERALS. IT FAVORS GREATER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON "THE PROBLEMS OF NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES."

13. BASIC HUMAN NEEDS: UNDER THIS HEADING, FOUR TOPICS ARE DISCUSSED.

A. FOOD, HERE, THE PAPER CITES THE NEED TO DEVELOP MORE CULTURALLY ACCEPTABLE MEANS OF RAISING PRODUCTIVITY, REDUCING STORAGE LOSSES, AND INCREASING THE NUTRITIVE VALUE OF FOODS. THE PAPER EMPHASIZES THE NEED FOR EXTENSION SERVICES, THOUGH IT ARGUES THAT BASIC RESEARCH MUST CARRY ON.

B. HEALTH: MOST OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER THIS HEADING DEAL WITH APPLYING KNOWN TECHNOLOGY TO THE PROBLEMS OF NUTRITION, COMMUNICABLE DISEASE AND CHILD

MORTALITY. IT DOES CITE A FEW NEW RESEARCH NEEDS, HOWEVER:
FOR LESS TOXIC AND MORE EFFECTIVE ANTI-MALARIA DRUGS AND
PESTICIDES; FOR FASTER ACTING DRUGS FOR LEPROSY AND
B, AND FOR TRANSISTORIZED X-RAY UNITS WITH CHEAPER FILM.

C. EDUCATION: HERE, THE PAPER ARGUES PRINCIPALLY FOR
GREATER COLLABORATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, BOTH IN
IMPROVING THE RELEVANCE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND IN
EXPLOITING NEW TECHNOLOGIES (SATELLITE, VIDEO TAPE, ETC.)
FOR GENERAL EDUCATION.

D. EMPLOYMENT: THE PAPER IDENTIFIES TWO CRUCIAL FACTORS
FOR USING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT:
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FIRST, STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN R AND D PRODUCERS AND
USERS, SO THAT NEW TECHNIQUES ARE BROUGHT INTO PRODUCTION; AND
SECOND, AN INDUSTRIAL POLICY WHICH MAXIMIZES EMPLOYMENT (THROUGH
EMPHASIS ON EMPLOYMENT-INTENSIVE AND DECENTRALIZED
INDUSTRIES). THERE IS A WELCOME EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO ENSURE
HIGH LABOR PRODUCTIVITY AT THE SAME TIME.

14. MANAGEMENT ON S AND T FOR DEVELOPMENT: MOST OF THIS
PAPER DESCRIBES THE NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONS SET UP BY THE GOI
TO ENCOURAGE SCIENCE. THE PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION
IS FOR CLOSER LINKS AMONG PRODUCERS AND USERS OF SCIENCE,
AND ESPECIALLY FOR MORE INVOLVEMENT OF INDUSTRY IN R AND D.

15. OVERALL, THE PAPER IS EVIDENCE OF A SERIOUS PREPARATORY
EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE GOI. THE FINAL COUNTRY PAPER
SHOULD BE A MORE USEFUL DOCUMENT IN THAT IT WILL ADDRESS THE
QUESTION OF WHAT THE UN SYSTEM CAN DO ABOUT THE PROBLEMS
THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, PLANNING MEETINGS, COMMITTEE MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE07419
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780199-1213
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780569/aaaacgti.tel
Line Count: 262
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 44188ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2720913
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN PREPARATIONS FOR UN CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (UNCSTD) SUMMARY: THE GOI HAS NOT YET COMPLETED ITS COUNTRY
TAGS: TPHY, TBIO, IN, UN, UNCSTD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/44188ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014